

CLAIMS:

1. A method for reconciling contracts in a multilateral environment comprising:  
receiving a contract formed from a contract template from the first system used by  
5 the first partner for goods or services from a second partner, the contract including a first  
party identifier identifying the first party and a service identifier identifying goods and  
services being requested by the first party;  
parsing the contract received into requested tag values representing predefined  
fields;
- 10 retrieving contract tag values relating to the same first party identifier and service  
identifier; and  
comparing the contract tag values with the requested tag values to determine if the  
requested tag values are in compliance with the contract tag values based on one or more  
predefined rules.
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2. The method according to claim 1, further comprising the step of  
notifying at least the first system used by the first partner if the requested tag values  
are not in compliance.
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3. The method according to claim 1, wherein the step of parsing includes parsing the  
contract received into requested XML tag values representing predefined fields.
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4. The method according to claim 1, further comprising the step of:  
sending a user interface for presentation of a contract template including user  
selectable predefined fields on a first system used by a first partner.

5. The method according to claim 4, further comprising:  
prompting at least one of the first partner using the first system and the second  
partner using the second system for a set of rules to govern contracts for a specific service  
5 identifier.
6. The method according to claim 1, further comprising:  
determining if the specific service identifier for goods and services from the second  
partner are related to any goods and services provided by a third partner using a third  
10 system, and if any of the goods and services are provided by the third partner then:  
comparing the requested tag values received for goods and services  
supplied by the third party for compliance with contract tag values for a second  
contract between the second partner and the third partner.
7. The method according to claim 5, wherein the step of comparing further comprises  
the sub-steps of:  
retrieving one or more predefined rules between the second partner and the third  
partner; and  
applying the rules retrieved for governing any discrepancies between the requested  
20 tag values and the contract tag values for the second contract.

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8. A business method for reconciling contracts on a centralized hub processing unit in a hub and spoke architecture for a multilateral environment comprising:
- linking a plurality of trading partners using partner systems over a network to a centralized hub processing unit;
- 5       presenting to at least one of the partner systems, a contract template including user selectable predefined fields on a first system used by a first partner for forming a contract;
- receiving a contract formed from a contract template from a first partner using one of the plurality of partner systems for goods and services from a second partner using one of the plurality of partner systems;
- 10      parsing the contract received into one or more requested tag values representing predefined fields;
- querying the database for predetermined hierarchical contractual relationships between the plurality of trading partners based on the requested tag values received including a first party identifier and a services identifier;
- 15      recursively analyzing the predetermined hierarchical contractual relationships between the plurality of trading partners by examining one or more contractual tag values stored in the database for contracts between each of the trading partners in the hierarchical contractual relationship by comparing the contract tag values with the requested tag values to determine if the requested tag values are in compliance with the contract tag values based on one or more predefined rules, for any goods and services to be supplied by any trading partner that is a member of the hierarchical contractual relationship for the requested tag values.

9. The business method according to claim 8, wherein the step of parsing includes
- 25      parsing the contract received into one or more requested XML tag values.

10. The business method according to claim 8, wherein the step of recursively analyzing further comprises the sub-steps of:

retrieving one or more predefined rules from any trading partner that is a member of the hierarchical contractual relationship for the contract; and

5 applying the rules retrieved for governing any discrepancies between the requested tag values and the trading partner in the hierarchical contract relationships supplying goods and services for the service identifier.

11. The business method according to claim 8, further comprising the step of:

10 placing the requested tag values into a database with a database schema using a naming structure that is identical to the naming structure used for the requested tag values from the contract received so that elements in the database schema can be populated directly from the requested tag values according to the predefined fields.

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12. A business method for reconciling contracts on a centralized hub processing unit in a hub and spoke architecture for a multilateral environment comprising:

linking a plurality of trading partners using partner systems over a network to a centralized hub processing unit;

5 presenting to at least one of the partner systems, a user interface for placing an contract;

receiving a contract from a first partner using one of the plurality of partner systems for goods and services from a second partner using one of the plurality of partner systems, the contract including a first party identifier identifying the first party and a service identifier  
10 identifying goods and services being requested by the first party;

parsing the contract received into one or more requested tag values representing predefined fields;

15 placing the requested tag values into a database with a database schema using a naming structure that is identical to the naming structure used for the requested tag values so that elements in the database schema can be populated directly from the requested tag values;

20 retrieving contract tag values that form a hierarchical contractual relationship between trading partners from a database for contracts between trading partners that supply any goods or services as determined by the requested tag values partners including the first party identifier and the services identifier

analyzing the contract tag values that form a hierarchical contractual relationship for compliance with the requested tag values to determine if the requested tag values are in compliance with the contract tag values bases on one or more predefined rules; and

25 sending an notification to each of the trading partners if requested tag values complies with the contract tag values that form the hierarchical contractual relationship.

13. The business method according to claim 12, wherein the step of parsing includes parsing the contract received into one or more XML tag values

14. A computer readable medium containing programming instructions for managing contracts on a centralized hub processing unit in a hub and spoke architecture for a multilateral environment, the programming instructions comprising:

linking a plurality of trading partners using partner systems over a network to a

5 centralized hub processing unit;

presenting to at least one of the partner systems, a contract template including user selectable predefined fields on a first system used by a first partner for forming a contract;

receiving a contract formed from a contract template from a first partner using one of the plurality of partner systems for goods and services from a second partner using one  
10 of the plurality of partner systems;

parsing the contract received into one or more requested tag values representing predefined fields;

querying the database for predetermined hierarchical contractual relationships between the plurality of trading partners based on the requested tag values received including a first party identifier and a services identifier;

recursively analyzing the predetermined hierarchical contractual relationships between the plurality of trading partners by examining one or more contractual tag values stored in the database for contracts between each of the trading partners in the hierarchical contractual relationship by comparing the contract tag values with the requested tag values to determine if the requested tag values are in compliance with the contract tag values based on one or more predefined rules, for any goods and services to be supplied by any trading partner that is a member of the hierarchical contractual relationship for the requested tag values.

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15. The computer readable medium according to claim 14, wherein the programming instruction of parsing includes parsing the contracts received into one or more requested XML tag values.

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16. The computer readable medium according to claim 14, wherein the programming instruction of recursively analyzing further comprises the programming instructions of:

retrieving one or more predefined rules from any trading partner that is a member of the hierarchical contractual relationship; and

5            applying the rules retrieved for governing any discrepancies between the requested tag values and the trading partner in the hierarchical contract relationships supplying goods and services for the service identifier.

17. The computer readable medium according to claim 14, further comprising the

10 programming instruction of:

placing the requested tag values into a database with a database schema using a naming structure that is identical to the naming structure used for the requested tag values from the contract received so that elements in the database schema can be populated directly from the requested tag values according to the predefined fields.

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18. A centralized processing hub for managing contract in a multilateral environment, comprising:

a channel coupled to a network for providing protocol translation and bi-directional communication between a plurality of partner systems, wherein at least one of the plurality

5 of partner systems is configured to receive at least one contract from a first partner;

a parser coupled to the channel which parses a contract received into one or more requested tag values representing predefined fields;

a database with a schema using a naming structure that is identical to the naming structure used for the requested tag values so that elements in the database schema can  
10 be populated directly from the requested tag values;

a data and rules analysis engine which retrieves contract tag values that form a hierarchical contractual relationship between trading partners from a database for contracts between trading partners that supply any goods or services as determined by the requested tag values partners including the first party identifier and the services identifier, and wherein the data and rules analysis analyzes the contract tag values that form a hierarchical contractual relationship for compliance with the requested tag values to determine if the requested tag values are in compliance with the contract tag values bases on one or more predefined rules; and

an action processor which sends an notification to each of the trading partners if requested tag values complies with the contract tag values that form the hierarchical contractual relationship.

19. The centralized processing hub according to claim 18, wherein the data and rules analysis engine is a constraint based inference engine.

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20. The centralized processing hub according to claim 19, wherein the data and rules analysis engine is a compatible with ILOG™ rules or Blade Advisor™.

21. The centralized processing hub according to claim 19, wherein the channel is a  
30 BizTalk orchestration™. or Extricity Alliance™. compatible product.

22. The centralized processing hub according to claim 19, wherein the parser parses the contract to produce XML tag values.